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The Tragedy of Richard Lee

By John Wilhelm

Introduction

Summer 1967 was too much for liberals in America. When Watts exploded in 1965, they blamed it on the 400-year oppression of American Negroes. The more widespread uprisings of 1966 produced doubts, but liberal America still maintained that the basic causes were sociological, not criminal.

But 1967's nationwide violence has produced a new schizophrenia in the liberal mind.

Whatever illusions the American people once had about a swift end to the war in Vietnam have disappeared. A new band of black revolutionaries has appeared at home, and every day this summer brought new suspicions that the black masses are following their advice. Revolution abroad and insurrection at home: these two crises together pose too serious a threat to American stability.

Liberal rhetoric continues, more hesitantly, to assign much of the blame to the poverty in which one-third of America lives. But the suspicion grows that the black people have taken advantage of their deprivation to wreak unnecessary and wanton havoc. Many well-intentioned and capable people are working hard to eradicate ghettoes; "riots" simply set the cause back, liberals believe.

In New Haven the schizophrenic response to black rebellion has become sharply defined. Liberalism has been in power for 14 years, and the city has become nationally famous for its efforts to solve the urban crisis. Nevertheless, the city's ghettoes blew up in mid-August.

The immediate spark for the disturbance was typical: a white snack bar owner on Congress Avenue, in the Hill section, shot a young Puerto Rican late one Saturday afternoon. Puerto Ricans and blacks in the Hill erupted that night.

Sunday afternoon both local and state police, equipped with rifles, shotguns, tear gas, and MACE (a new aerosol-spray nerve gas), deployed in large numbers in the city's ghettoes. That night violence spread throughout the city. By the time it stopped Wednesday night, millions of dollars of damage had been done, countless stores looted, and 500 people arrested.

Black militants were bitter. They could have stopped the violence, they said, if Mayor Richard Lee had kept a series of agreements made and immediately broken Sunday. City Hall says the militants did not have enough influence among their own people to stop it.

The city's basic policy was to seal off the black and Puerto Rican areas and arrest anyone who moved. Ghetto leaders say the people felt they were being counter-attacked by police, and that this provocation made the violence much more serious than it might have been.

In late September Community Progress Inc., the Mayor's anti-poverty program, released its annual report. It was prefaced by a statement called "Violence and CPI."

Many of the "disadvantaged," the report said, have taken heart from New Haven's public dedication to progress. Too many, however, "look out on a world where their people still live in the worst parts of town, hold the poorest-paying jobs, suffer most from disease, are looked down on and shunned." CPI declared renewed war on the "privation and frustration and anguish whose continuance can mean recurrent violence and threats of violence in this and every other city."

These sections of the CPI analysis are in the best liberal tradition of recognizing basic social problems. There is a quite different side to the report, however; it reads almost as if two different people wrote it.

Most of the rioters, it says, were "teenage hooligans" with "a thirst for revelry"; they were a tiny minority of the ghetto population. "Few if any of the incidents of the four days bespoke any widespread discontent. There is no basis for reading into the four-day flareup (as a few have done) an Inner City-wide indictment of the physical and human-renewal efforts of 14 years."

Furthermore, "the fact is that City Hall and CPI are the chief militants in the Inner City crisis. The most strident critics . . . rarely address themselves to the most difficult, vexing task of meeting urgent day-to-day needs."

This despite the fact that the most publicized "strident critic" is Fred Harris, whose Hill Parents Association ran four CPI-funded programs this summer. CPI workers in the Hill readily admit the programs were a huge success, in particular because they were planned, administered, and staffed almost entirely by the blacks and Puerto Ricans of the Hill.

This is the liberal response to New Haven's rebellion. The basic sources are still recognized; but the Lee administration is unwilling to admit that anything more than demagogery and teenage hoodlumism really caused it.

The Mayor fully intends to lend reality to that analysis by eliminating the "demagogues." Since the August uprising the liberal Lee administration has been working with that most conservative of governmental institutions, the FBI. Early this month a Federal grand jury subpoenaed Fred Harris and other black militants. Local police leaked to the press that the object is to put them in jail.

Mayor Lee is making his choice. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a leading Kennedy liberal, succinctly defined that choice in a speech to the Americans for Democratic Action last month: liberals, he said, must "see more clearly that their essential interest is in the stability of the social order, and that . . . it is necessary to seek out and make much more effective alliance with political conservatives who share that concern . . ."

What Moynihan suggests nationally the country's most liberal Mayor is carrying out locally: the "essential interest" is not justice but stability. Why has Mayor Lee made that tragic choice? Why does he cooperate in the effort to jail the man whose organization did more with $45,000 in one summer to involve the hard-core poor in constructive self-help programs than CPI does in a year with over $6 million.

The answer lies in an examination of the forces the Mayor has brought together to keep liberalism in power.

Richard C. Lee was in the 1950's an extraordinary mayor. Liberal America had to sit out the quiescent Eisenhower years, its radical cutting edge sapped by McCarthyism, its new blood shut off by the silent generation. Liberals roused themselves just often enough to cheer Adlai Stevenson on to defeat; the years between were lean.

One of the few bright spots on the national horizon was New Haven, a middle-sized industrial city then noted mostly as the site of Yale University. When Dick Lee became mayor in 1953, on his third try for the job, he did for a city of 160,000 what Stevensonians had failed to do for the country: he brought liberalism to power.

Lee has never been a Stevenson-style egghead. He is, on the contrary, a political genius who also happens to sincerely believe that American cities must be rebuilt.

Lee came out of a working-class Irish neighborhood in New Haven, worked his way up through the local Democratic Party, and received his polish and finesse as director of the Yale News Bureau. In his 14 years as mayor—and he will win an eighth term this fall—Lee has completely reshaped local politics and adapted it to his drive to rebuild the city.

When Lee started in 1953, Washington was not, as it became during the New Frontier, a playground for bright, sharp young liberals. Lee was able to bring a talented group of high-powered, sometimes visionary, young men to New Haven —the kind who worked for John Kennedy and now flock to the swollen staff of Robert Kennedy, or who find a spot in the liberal refuges still left in Johnson's Washington.

This group—Lee gleefully called the building they worked in the "Kremlin"—was headed until 1961 by Edward Logue.

Lee and his young hot-shots got in early on the Federal urban money grab-bag. William F. Buckley pointed out a year ago that if every American city got the amount of per-capita Federal money New Haven brought back from Washington, the national budget for urban programs alone would be something like $146 billion.

New Haven's out-of-proportion success at landing Federal money is no accident; by the time other cities were waking up to the New Frontier and the Great Society, Lee and his Kremlin were veterans at the politics and the red tape of extracting money from Washington.

Lee's planners have not only had more money than any other city to work with; they have also had greater political freedom. By using redevelopment and later the war on poverty as his tools, Lee has completely reshaped the power bases of the New Haven Democratic Party.

When Lee assumed office in 1953, power within the party was split between John Golden, the aging Irish boss who is now Democratic National Committeeman from Connecticut, and Arthur Barbieri, the new Town Chairman who brought dissident Italians into the Democratic fold.

Lee has let those men keep the traditional party organization and traditional patronage sources like the Public Works Department.

His stategy has been to bring new muscle into the Party—muscle which ultimately is much more important than the old-line ward organization which Barbieri still runs.

Unlike old-style reformers, Lee made no attempt to capture the traditional city structure; he doesn't even control the Board of Aldermen, although all of its 33 members are Democrats.

Lee has his people in these institutions, but the basic strategy of control is much simpler; he just created another city government parallel to and eventually above the old one. It's not in the City Charter, but Lee's private government is what is shaping the city.

This new government is the Redevelopment Agency and the complex of organizations around it, plus since 1962 Community Progress, Inc., the local anti-poverty program. At the head is the Development Administrator, who in fact is the deputy mayor.

Logue occupied this post until 1961; L. Thomas Appleby, who had the job for four years, and Melvin J. Adams, who has it now, both started under Logue in the Kremlin. The actual boss of this whole complex is, of course, the Mayor.

This highly paid, well-staffed, sophisticated bureaucracy has assumed control of New Haven. It makes all important decisions about the shape of the city: which stores occupy the downtown, which industries get new plants, what highways go where and who gets new houses. It has a monopoly of information and expertise, so that whoever challenges it can neither disprove what it says nor criticize its future plans.

Traditional government agencies cannot compete: many of the non-salaried aldermen, who lack even secretarial help, did not even read the 1967 city budget before they passed it. While the city has done well in school construction, which falls under the Redevelopment Agency, the educational program itself—which is under the Board of Education—has made little significant progress.

Allan Talbot, in his book *The Mayor's Game* (published early this year), provides an excellent account of Lee's techniques in transferring power from the traditional city government to his private bureaucracy.

What is important, however, is not the politics by which this was done—although it was a brilliant piece of work—but the implications of this power transfer.

Lee's private government has provided him with a vast patronage pool, financed not by local taxes but by Federal and foundation money. The Board of Aldermen has been rendered impotent so that the people cannot make their views felt at the polls short of throwing out their apparently impregnable Mayor.

Lee has tied his nationally-known liberal image to his renewal programs; and the agencies that run those programs act as one of the biggest and most efficient public relations organizations any politician ever had.

The most important fact about this new power, however, is that it has *integrated the city government with the real powers in New Haven life: the banks, big business, and Yale*. It is these groups who give Mayor Lee decisive backing both in the city and within the Democratic Party.

Corporate power has traditionally left municipal politics to its own devices, because local government has rarely interfered with business. With the advent of an administration that proposed to rebuild New Haven, that relationship had to change.

Yale was the first corporate power in the city to recognize the potential of the Lee program. The Mayor had become friends with top Yale people during his 10-year tenure at the University's News Bureau.

A. Whitney Griswold, the late President of Yale, was vital in rallying University support for Lee, from the Corporation on down. One of Lee's unparalleled feats at the News Bureau was getting Griswold on the covers of both *Time* and *Newsweek* the same week.

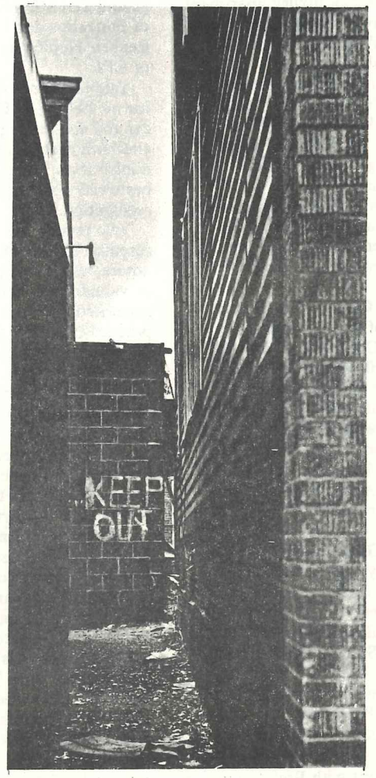
His Yale connections are very important to Lee, personally as well as politically. His dress and mannerisms reflect his Ivy League tutelage. The Mayor regularly gets his afternoon rubdown at the Payne-Whitney gym, and Mory's is a frequent luncheon spot, as well as a regular location for political confabs.

The relationship is not emphasized to the working people of New Haven—anti-Yale sentiment is rife in town—but when he speaks to Yale groups, Lee likes to use phrases like "When I was at Yale . . ."

Most of Lee's numerous enthusiastic supporters—those in print range from Yale Divinity School Prof. William Lee Miller's embarrassingly panegyric *The Fifteenth Ward and the Great Society* to Talbot's more analytic *The Mayor's Game* —like to emphasize that Yale's support for Lee stems from his liberal social philosophy.

Talbot quotes former Law School Dean Eugene V. Rostow as finding in the Mayor "a simple, yet intense moral purpose . . . He was attacking fundamental ills of our time, the moral, economic, and social injustice of the slums."

The relationship has its more concrete, mutually advantageous aspects. Yale likes to be surrounded by a clean, bright, modern downtown area. A Yale education rests on an upper-class style of life and on the consideration of intellectual problems in isolation from the outside world. Yale's very architecture—forbidding stone walls, moats, heavy locked gates, and opulent, comfortable, self-contained in-



teriors—embodies this approach to education.

Beginning in the early 1950's the Oak Street and Dixwell slums pushed tighter and tighter against the University; and Yale considered neither the slums nor the shabby downtown area proper neighbors.

Mayor Lee's first redevelopment project dealt with part of this problem. When Oak Street, the city's worst slum, was torn down in the middle 1950's and replaced with the turnpike connector, a series of new office buildings and stores, and two of the most nondescript luxury apartment buildings anywhere—Madison and University Towers—Yale thus had its most discomfiting neighbor excised.

The downtown renewal project finished that part of the job by installing Malley's, Macy's, a new bank, Paul Rudolph's parking lot, and finally, after several years as a giant hole in the ground, the new Chapel Square shopping mall.

Two more projects now on the drawing boards, one Yale's and the other the city's, will complete the encirclement of the University by an environment acceptable to it.

The Mellon Art Gallery will take care of a pesky block of small stores and apartments along Chapel. The projected inner loop road will effectively isolate Yale from Dixwell and the rapidly expanding black population in the Dwight neighborhood across Howe Street. It will also save the Medical School from the blacks and Puerto Ricans in the Hill.

This loop, part expressway and part boulevard, will start from the I-91 Trumbull Street exit, an engineering disaster, circle behind the Grove Street Cemetery and Payne-Whitney and go down Howe and Dwight to the turnpike connector, which is being extended, and then circle beyond the medical school-hospital complex and join State Street, by then a six-lane road.

To please Yale, which does not want Vassar's proposed Prospect Street site and the science complex to be cut off from the rest of the University, Lee has made a tentative agreement with Brewster to bury the Trumbull Street section of the loop underground.

Another of the many instances of mutually beneficial cooperation between Yale and the Mayor is Yale's $3 million purchase of the old Hillhouse and Boardman Commercial high schools, now the site of Morse and Stiles, in 1955 for a price much higher than market value. Lee got money needed for working capital; the large profit margin, and the city's free use of the schools until 1958, helped overcome political opposition to the sale.

Another piece of cooperation is in the offing if Vassar comes to New Haven and locates, as projected, on Prospect Street. Upper Winchester Avenue and Newhall Street, below Prospect Hill, are rapidly becoming serious slum areas, and Vassar will not tolerate a ghetto next to it. An employee of the Redevelopment Agency says that the area will be "cleaned out."

Yale gains from its cooperation with the Mayor, then, by insuring the kind of clean, undisturbed surroundings it requires for its methods of training the nation's leaders.

The Lee administration has also given many Yale people the chance to dabble in local politics—examples are Law School Dean Louis Pollack on the Board of Education and University Secretary Reuben Holden as president of the board of CPI.

Yale has generously repaid the Mayor for his help. The University's local political and economic power are enormous, and both are solidly behind the Lee administration. Yale has consistently bestowed upon Lee official praise and recognition.

Yale faculty has been an important resource for the Mayor for expertise, free advice, and image-building publicity. A lot of valuable publicity has also been generated for New Haven by Yale's practice of hiring famous architects to design its new buildings.

In marked contrast to Yale, the banks and big businesses were slow in recognizing Lee's value. Many influential businessmen viewed him for several years as a threat; all have now accepted him as a phenomenon here to stay, and most are enthusiastic supporters of his programs.

To overcome business animosity, Lee first had to demonstrate to the retailers that a downtown location was ultimately more profitable than fleeing to the suburbs. The middle and upper classes, Lee argued, would shop downtown and eventually live there when his redevelopment program had done its job. The convincing wasn't easy, but Lee did it. For instance, when the Mayor decided to announce plans for the Church Street South project (the vacant land in front of the railroad station), he did it in a speech to the Chamber of Commerce. The 800-plus housing units there, he said, would be at least 90 percent middle-income and luxury housing; this would constitute a "captive market" for the new downtown shopping area.

But it took the big businesses some time to come around. The man who helped Lee win the argument was Roger L. Stevens, who in addition to making an immense amount of money from real estate, also produces Broadway plays and contributes heavily to the national Democratic Party. He is President Johnson's adviser on the arts, and chairman of all sorts of national councils on the arts. The most legendary of Stevens' grandiose financial moves was in 1951, when he bought and sold the Empire State Building.

Lee and Logue got Stevens to become the financier for the original four-block downtown commercial redevelopment. The obstacles were numerous.

The small businessmen there were overwhelmed without too much difficulty, but the big problem was getting the big businesses in.

Malley's, an old New Haven family firm, was convinced to buy into the new project. The real turning point, however, was when Macy's agreed to come to town; and once again Yale helped out.

In 1962 the University lent Stevens $4.5 million for short-term financing. J. Richardson Dilworth, financial adviser to the Rockefellers, was on the Yale Corporation when the loan was approved. He was also on the board of Macy's, and a chain of events that began with a Dilworth-Lee meeting at Mory's culminated when Macy's agreed to build a $5 million store in downtown New Haven. Macy's arrival broke the back of local big business opposition to Lee's programs.

Charles Abrams, in his book *The City is the Frontier*, explains in some detail how urban renewal enabling legislation—which with a little gerrymandering the downtown project became eligible for—guarantees large profits for big constructions companies and lending institutions.

Retailers, money-lending banks and insurance companies, and construction and real-estate interests all began to understand their opportunity. A whole new field for investment opened up to them—or would if they became Democratic Party backers.

Fusco-Amatruda, for instance, a huge construction company based in New Haven, became the developer for the Chapel Square shopping mall; and Arthur Barbieri, the Democratic Town Chairman, landed the Chapel Square rental agents job for his real estate company.

It is since 1961, when he came the closest to losing an election, that Mayor Lee has demonstrated to the corporations that he is right: there is big money to be made in his urban renewal program.

It is also since 1961 that the Democratic Party has demolished the Republicans in New Haven. In 1965 Lee pulled down the largest victory margin ever for a New Haven Mayor. And the Republicans can't seem to raise any money for this fall's mayoralty election.

With Yale and the big business support, the Democratic Party now runs New Haven—but it is not the same Democratic Party that captured the mayoralty for Dick Lee 14 years ago.

The Mayor is fond of saying that when he and his Kremlin started, they didn't know where they were going or how they were going to get there—just that they wanted to rebuild their city.

It is clear that Lee had no idea what his Democratic Party would look like after 14 years of his administration. It is not true that he set out on his renewal program simply to solidify his political power; power, of course, is important to him, but equally important is his belief that he is rebuilding New Haven.

This drive for the "new New Haven" began with the redevolpment program in 1953.

After nine years of what the city calls 'physical renewal," Lee decided that only half the job was being done. The result was $2.5 million from the Ford Foundation in 1962 to start Community Progress, Inc., the city's anti-poverty program. Once again, New Haven pioneered; when the Federal government opened the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1964, many of its initial programs were modeled on CPI's experience. Today the Federal government provides over 80 percent of CPI's $6 million-plus annual budget. CPI, Lee says, does the job physical renewal neglects: "human renewal."

In both of these programs, "coalition" is the key word. Lee's approach is the most comprehensive attempt in the United States to implement the basic liberal theory of change: that those in power will use their power to significantly improve the lot of the disadvantaged, once they are made aware that it is in their self-interest to do so.

At bottom is the assumption that the entire community, rich or poor, black or white, shares a common interest.

Fourteen years of redevelopment have yet to prove that this is true. The face of New Haven is being dramatically changed, but the corporations have changed it by building the things business finds profitable or necessary: big stores, expressways and parking lots that service these stores, office buildings, a hotel, and middle-income and luxury housing.

All of these projects are money-makers. Only one kind of construction is seriously needed in the city that is not profitable: low-income housing.

The poor people have simply been moved from place to place. When Lee and his Kremlin tore down the Oak Street slum, most of its white residents headed for Fair Haven or Wooster Square and the blacks went to Dixwell.

Redevelopment followed them to Wooster Square and Dixwell, and it is on its way to the Hill, Fair Haven, and Newhallville. The extension of the turnpike connector is taking care of the Legion Ave. area, perhaps the worst slum pocket in the city.

Because discrimination in housing is still widespread and blatant, the problems for blacks and Puerto Ricans have intensified. The non-white population has nearly doubled since 1960, from about 20 percent to an estimated 35 per cent this year.

Redevelopment Agency figures say that the city has relocated 6776 households, 4785 of them since 1960. This figure does not include families who don't wait for the Relocation Agency, but move out when they hear the bulldozers are on their way.

Of those families relocated since 1960, 2076 have been white and 1794 black; this means that, by the Redevelopment Agency's own admission, less than five per cent of the city's white people but almost 30 per cent of the blacks have been moved. A Yale planning student's study, based on 1965 figures, calculated that 40 per cent of the total Negro population had been relocated.

What was built for these people? In mid-1965 redevelopment had erected 1676 housing units; 700 were luxury apartments and 976 were middle-income. More in those categories have been opened since 1965. A low-income public housing project with about 25 units is about to open in Fair Haven, and about 100 other poor families have received rent supplements.

Beyond that, nothing has been done since the big housing public projects were built in the late 1940's and early '50's except some housing for the elderly; only token numbers of low-cost units are even on the drawing boards.

The attempt to relocate tenants from the path of Route 34, the turnpike connector extension, points up the seriousness of the housing crisis for low-income families particularly blacks. The Legion Avenue area is being torn down for this road, which will be one of the widest roads in the world, with six lanes of traffic, an immense grassy median strip, and a wide bank on either side—even though it runs through the middle of the city.

This neighborhood has the biggest concentration in New Haven of large families on welfare. The State Highway Department, which is building the road, had hoped that relocation could be finished by this fall so construction could start, but over one-half of the families are still there even though the state now owns all the properties.

The buildings are falling to pieces; the first week of October saw two major fires in these apartments. Relocation officials admit in private that there is just no place to put these families. A top official of the State Welfare Department said in Hartford last year that some large welfare families have already had to move out of New Haven because there is no place for them to live.

It is clear that the interests of the poor have not been properly represented in the redevelopment program. CPI, some people hoped before they saw it in action, would overcome this problem by organizing the people to make their needs known.

Allan Talbot claims in *The Mayor's Game* that a new political force—"direct citizen action"—is at work in the city. CPI, Talbot says, has "played key behind-the-scenes roles in most of the recent stir and action." In its first four years, according to this analysis, CPI invested $1,639,574 in "neighborhood organization."

The bulk of this "neighborhood organization" money in fact went for the CPI neighborhood offices, which in no sense organize neighborhoods. CPI is a very tightly administered, top-down organization, with every major decision made by the executive staff and the Mayor. The neighborhood offices simply carry out the directives from downtown. What little community organization CPI indulges in has been designed to create pressure for goals selected in advance by the CPI staff.

CPI, like the development program, is a coalition of those in the community who already have power. These power groups do not believe that those who dominate society are responsible for the depressed condition of the poor and the blacks; implicit in their programs is the assumption that the poor are where they are because something is wrong with them, whether it be lack of education, poor motivation, or something else.

The CPI approach denies that powerlessness is an important factor in the ghettoes; and it denies, by its top-down control and its predominantly white middle-class policy makers, that the poor ought to have an important voice in programs designed to help them.

Some individuals have been able to begin the climb out of poverty with CPI help, but the organization will never significanty affect large groups so long as it tries to pull individuals out and up rather than mobilizing the masses of the poor in their own behalf.

Maurice Sykes, a black CPI neighborhood worker, put the problem succinctly last month: CPI, he said, has "done a helluva job, but they overlooked the grass roots."

All of Mayor Lee's vaunted programs overlook the fact that the economic structure of the United States has always rested on an underclass. Previous immigrant groups have been able to rise in the society only because they were replaced by another group of immigrants.

In this way the Italians replaced the Irish as the lower class in urban industrial centers, and as the blacks and Puerto

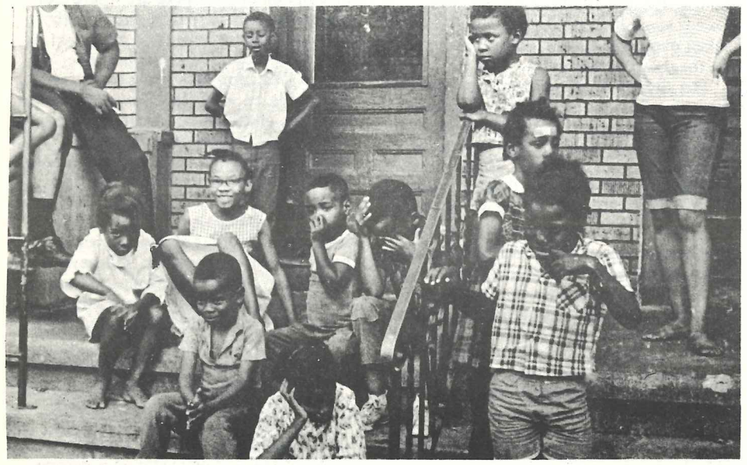


Photo by Dick Balzer

Ricans moved to the cities they replaced the Italians.

Because there are no more new immigrant groups, and because this country is racist, the blacks and Puerto Ricans have remained on the bottom, along with some whites who didn't make it. There is no replacement group in sight.

The implication, clearly, is that those who are poor now will remain that way unless the structure of the society is changed in some basic way. It is foolish to expect that programs run by those who have gained power in the present structure will do anything but perpetuate that structure.

Large corporations are making a lot of money these days, and there is no reason to expect them to disturb the status quo when they profit so much from it.

If those who make decisions now continue to have that power, the poor will remain where they are: on the bottom. If the poor are going to have some voice in the decisions that affect their lives, they are going to have to *take* power. No one is going to give it to them.

This is the fatal shortcoming of the Lee programs for change. They are based on the liberal assumption that a community of interest exists between the poor and the powerful. That is demonstrably untrue, for in New Haven the lot of the poor has not improved despite the millions of dollars spent on renewal programs.

The tragic fact about all this is that Mayor Lee does not understand what is wrong with his programs. He is fond of saying in public that "if New Haven is a model city, then God help urban America"; but he is at bottom convinced that he has done well.

Talbot quotes him as replying, when asked if he regretted passing up the 1958 Senatorial nomination which eventually went to Thomas Dodd, "Sure, every once in a while I have my regrets, but . . . I've already done something that few men will ever do—I've rebuilt a city, not just any city, mind you, but a city I love."

There is clearly something amiss in that city. The "riots" pointed up the problem, but Dick Lee does not understand what the problem is. When the Mayor swept into office, a bright star in a dismal decade for liberals, he stirred hope in the hearts of the poor as well as middle-class men of good will. The goal was, he said, nothing less than a "slumless city." It is significant that Melvin Adams, Lee's current Development Administrator, said last year that the "slumless city" wasn't, after all, possible; "controlled slums" is actually the goal.

Why the current uneasiness? The war in Vietnam has cut down funds for liberal domestic programs, and it has also alienated many blacks because they bear such a disproportionate burden in the fighting. New Haven's programs are no longer unique in the country, as they were when Lee started in the 1950's, and it is becoming difficult for the city to get such an out-of-proportion share of Federal money.

Many of Lee's sharpest administrators have moved on, part of a new group of floating anti-poverty and renewal professionals who shift from city to city not because the work is done in one place but because their personal ambitions dictate that they keep climbing in the "human resources business," as Mitchell Sviridoff, the first executive director of CPI, calls it.

Sviridoff has excelled in this game of personal advancement through fighting poverty: he left his job at CPI to head New York's new Human Resources Administration—at a substantial salary raise—and now, after a little over a year there, he is resigning to take a $50,000 job as a Ford Foundation vice president.

There are many other examples; New Haven is a training ground for renewal administrators all over the country. Logue this summer resigned as chief of the Boston Redevelopment Authority to run for mayor of that city; L. Thomas Appleby, who followed Logue as Development Administrator, now runs renewal in Washington, D.C.; the list is practically endless.

These factors have all contributed to New Haven's unrest. Basically, however, the problem is very simple: the years of rhetoric by the Lee administration have simply never been fulfilled. CPI's training programs are a stopgap which help only a small percentage of the poor.

Redevelopment may be rebuilding the city, but its major effect on all but the well-off is to tighten the housing market. The poor have not been effectively organized to make their needs felt in the city; they have depended on the good will of the Lee administration.

They have been forced to depend on good will, because they have nothing to say about what happens. Lee's government is a tightly-run operation, with every major decision cleared over his desk. Information about the city's plans is kept secret until final decisions are made. Consensus is the goal and too often the reality; plans are made not by discussion and disagreement but by administrative fiat.

The director of a major service project in New Haven says that he constantly gets calls from the Mayor's office, saying "You guys take it easy over there. We're running this town." In that kind of administration the only disagreement tolerated is from those who already have significant power. The voices of the protesting poor are shunted aside as quickly as possible.

When the city holds Federally-required "public hearings" for some of its programs, Lee's officials can never understand why people protest. They usually return from these meetings shaking their heads and wondering "why those people don't understand . . . why they're so unreasonable." Then whatever plan was being aired goes ahead, on the assumption that the Mayor's people know best.

It is ironic, in fact, that people at Yale make so much of the fact that they at last have a chance to participate constructively in city politics. It is, after all, their University and their class of people for whom the city is being rebuilt.

According to Allan Talbot, "New Haven's message to other cities is written in optimism . . . It has demonstrated that the work of restoring our cities can be challenging, fruitful, and even fun. . . . New Haven shows that there can be nobility in action, that it is far better to participate than to watch."

That would make ironic reading for the poor who are pleading with the Lee administration to let them run their own programs and rebuild their own neighborhoods before it is too late.

Dick Lee is hardly campaigning at all this fall, although he is running for his eighth term as Mayor of New Haven. This is, he says, a time of crisis, "no time for ordinary politics." He can afford not to campaign this year, because his Democratic Party is supported by virtually every group in the city with any political power. The Republican Party has been reduced to a joke. There are two new sources of potential opposition in the city, but neither has yet organized a sufficient political base to be a threat at the polls

The first of these new additions to the city's political scene is the American Independent Movement, which ran Yale sociology professor Robert Cook for Congress last fall as an independent. Cook polled a little over 4000 votes within New Haven. AIM is basically a white middle-class group, drawing its hard core from young professionals and intellectuals who have banded together because of a common anger with the condition of the country.

AIM makes no bones about its radical opposition to America's policies, both foreign and domestic. Bob Cook, writing about the "riots" in New Haven, bluntly said "that the forces which control the community are in fact *illegitimate*, that their law and order are in fact *illegal*, and that at bottom their position rests upon force and violence."

AIM presents an often incisive intellectual analysis to back up this radical stance; but so far it has not done any real organizing, and it has failed to acquaint the community at large with its analysis and its program.

For that reason AIM is powerless, and poses a political threat to no one.

The other new force in New Haven politics is, of course, the angry black people. They have not yet organized themselves into a force which can contend for power at the polls, but they have certainly made themselves felt politically. The message they carry—the message of Fred Harris, the quiet little man who is their most impressive leader, and of the nameless angry men on the streetcorners—is that if the white people can't solve the problems they had better just get out of the way and let the black people try.

Harris' Hill Parents Association and its allies are a real challenge to those in power, and that is why they are being threatened with federal prosecution. The militant blacks have made it too clear that they understand that basic changes are necessary.

The Lee administration has demonstrated that a determined liberal can do everything possible to rebuild urban America, so long as he does not challenge the right of those in power to make the crucial decisions on priorities.

The real powers—the corporations—can, Lee has demonstrated, even grow to appreciate a liberal program. The Mayor has built a political coalition that rests on those who have money and resources—and this coalition therefore does not include the blacks and the other poor people in New Haven.

The tragedy of all this is that Richard C. Lee does not understand why his city is racked with unrest. Lee is not evil; he is a sincere man who wants to make New Haven a better place for its people.

The Mayor has used his political genius to wring everything possible out of those who hold power; but to step outside the existing structure simply does not occur to him.

Lee has built his political career on the assumption that America as he knows it can solve its urban problems. The nation as a whole has certainly not demonstrated that this proposition is true; and neither has the Lee administration.

Friends of the Mayor say he calls people over to him at cocktail parties now, and insists on telling them about all these up-start critics. He has been fighting for a better New Haven for 14 years, the Mayor will say—and where have these critics been all that time? They just don't understand, he says.

AIM

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This article first appeared in The New Journal, Vol 1, No. 1, October 15, 1967. John Wilhelm has worked closely with the Hill Parents Association for some years, and has been an AIM worker since its inception in the early spring of 1966. The AIM Newsletter staff felt that an article of such quality, growing out of work done in our community by an HPA-AIM worker, required a special supplement printing of the Newsletter to our readers. The article is particularly timely in view of the forthcoming New Haven municipal election.